

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0423)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-2025, the Government states that it will oversee the stepping up of prosecution and inspections against overcharging for water at sub-divided units. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

- (a) the manpower and resources allocated for 2024-25 to execute this task; and
- (b) the key performance indicators in respect of inspections against overcharging for water at sub-divided units?

Asked by: Hon LOONG Hon-biu, Louis (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The Government is committed to combating illegal acts concerning overcharging of water in subdivided units (SDU) through an inter-departmental and multi-pronged approach, including enacting relevant legislative amendments, stepping up inspections and streamlining the application procedures for the installation of separate water meters, and strengthening of publicity and education efforts, with a view to enhancing the deterrent effect in preventing SDU tenants from being overcharged for water by the landlord.

- (a) The Water Supplies Department (WSD) will step up inspections, investigations and prosecution against overcharging for water at SDU. In 2024-25, a team of 35 staff members deployed from the WSD's existing internal resources will carry out these tasks.
- (b) Upon passing the Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2023, the WSD's power in evidence collection and information disclosure will be enhanced. This will help the WSD identify contravention cases and conduct investigations, which may lead to an expected increase in number of cases to handle. The WSD will monitor the number of cases to assess the situation and the way forward for establishing key performance indicator.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0498)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

As fresh water is a precious resource, the Government will continue to expedite the conversion to seawater for flushing for more buildings. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. What were the manpower and expenditure involved in the operation and maintenance of the seawater flushing supply system in the past 3 years?
2. Is the extension of seawater supply network for flushing involved in the estimates for 2024-25? If yes, what are the areas involved and the estimated expenditure?
3. For areas where the extension of seawater supply network has been completed, what measures did the Government take to encourage the consumers to convert to seawater for flushing? Will the Government consider taking enforcement actions against consumers who have not converted to seawater for flushing for a long time and mandating the conversion?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

Seawater has been used for flushing in Hong Kong since the 1950s. Over the years, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has been progressively extending the seawater supply network for flushing to conserve precious fresh water, i.e., potable water resources. The WSD will, from time to time, review the technical feasibility of extensions of the seawater supply network for flushing and continue to enhance the network wherever it is cost-effective to do so.

1. According to our record, the number of WSD staff involved in the operation and maintenance of the seawater flushing supply system in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 were 799, 791 and 790 respectively. Since the staff participating in the above work have other duties to handle as well, we are unable to provide expenditure figures in respect of such work.
2. The WSD is implementing various works for the extension of seawater supply network across the territory, including the conversion from fresh water to salt water for flushing, the network improvement and equipment upgrading works to the seawater flushing supply system, etc. The relevant expenditure accounts for about \$300 million of the overall estimate for 2024-25.

3. To encourage consumers to convert to seawater for flushing, the WSD will continue to explain to them the benefits of using seawater for flushing, including (i) seawater flushing is free to use while temporary mains fresh water for flushing is chargeable based on consumption; (ii) seawater and fresh water systems operate independently and thus, for premises using seawater for flushing, the flushing water supply will not be affected even when the fresh water system is not working, or vice versa; (iii) converting to seawater for flushing saves precious fresh water resources; and (iv) the cost and energy consumption for supplying seawater are relatively low and the conversion to seawater for flushing helps to reduce carbon emission. Besides, connection between the inside services and the government seawater network may be required for conversion to seawater for flushing in some premises. The WSD will waive the connection fee in accordance with the established conditions. If the consumers encounter technical difficulties when altering the inside services for the conversion works, the WSD will provide technical advice to them when necessary.

When the seawater supply network is ready, the WSD will request consumers to replace fresh water with seawater for flushing. If consumers refuse to cooperate in conducting the conversion, the WSD will, having regard to individual circumstances, consider revoking the approval of the use of fresh water for flushing.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0991)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the work to establish the Water Intelligent Network (WIN):

1. Please provide the number of districts among the 18 districts in Hong Kong where the WIN have been established. Has the situation of water main bursts improved after the establishment of the WIN? What are the functions of the WIN in respect of the monitoring and repair works of water mains?
2. Regarding the problem of frequent occurrences of water main bursts at the area of Shek Yam Road and Wo Yi Hop Road in Kwai Chung, has the WIN been established in the area? Could the Government give an account of the coverage of the WIN and its effectiveness on improving or monitoring water main bursts?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) is establishing the Water Intelligent Network (WIN) in the fresh water distribution network over the territory, with a target of about 2 400 District Metering Areas (DMAs). It helps to strengthen management of leakage in water supply network with the strategy of “divide and conquer” and continuous monitoring, and to implement appropriate measures including active leakage detection, pressure management, speedy repair of water main leaks as well as replacement or rehabilitation of water mains etc. with a view to maintaining the healthiness of the network. As at the end of February 2024, about 2 020 DMAs have been established covering all districts across Hong Kong. The remaining DMAs are expected for completion in 2025. Shek Yam Road and Wo Yi Hop Road in Kwai Chung are located in Kwai Tsing District where about 125 DMAs have been established as at the end of February 2024.

Besides, the WSD will assess the risk of water mains taking into account various factors such as age of use, materials, records of bursts or leaks, surrounding environment and consequence resulting from bursts or leaks, so as to replace or rehabilitate specific sections of water mains with higher risk progressively with a view to continuously maintaining the healthiness of the water supply network and reducing the risk of water main bursts or leaks. As at the end of

2023, a total of approximately 16 km long water mains in Kwai Tsing District has been included in the “risk-based asset management programme for water mains”. Amongst them, approximately 7 km long water mains have been replaced or rehabilitated while the improvement works for the rest are underway or will be progressively carried out.

Through the establishment of the WIN and the implementation of the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains, the WSD effectively maintained the healthiness of the water supply network and reduced the risk of water main bursts or leaks. The measures are gradually taking effect. As regards Kwai Tsing District including the area of Shek Yam Road and Wo Yi Hop Road in Kwai Chung, in the past 10 years, the number of burst cases of fresh water mains dropped from around 30 each year to 0 in 2023, while the number of leakage cases decreased from about 230 each year to about 110 in 2023.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1318)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (2) Water Quality Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Government will oversee the implementation of initiatives under the Action Plan for Enhancing Drinking Water Safety in Hong Kong (Action Plan) and Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme (WSPSS). In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) The Action Plan collects drinking water samples from water taps of randomly selected consumers of the territory for testing. What were the number of samples collected, and the expenditure and staffing involved in each of the past 3 years?
- (b) Since the implementation of WSPSS in 2020, what were the number of applications, and the expenditure and staffing involved in each of the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

- (a) Under the Action Plan for Enhancing Drinking Water Safety in Hong Kong, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) launched the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme (Enhanced Programme) in December 2017 to monitor the drinking water at consumers' taps in randomly selected premises. The parameters being monitored include 6 metals (viz. antimony, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead and nickel), residual chlorine and *Escherichia coli*. The numbers of tests on drinking water samples under the Enhanced Programme in the past 3 years are as follows:

	2021	2022 ^(Note)	2023
Number of randomly selected premises	675	460	661
(Number of samples)	(1 525)	(1 385)	(1 987)

Note: In view of the COVID-19 epidemic situation at the time, the WSD suspended collection of drinking water samples under the Enhanced Programme from 13 January to 19 May 2022.

The Water Safety Unit of the Water Science Division in the WSD is responsible for the implementation of the Enhanced Programme and there are 18 staff posts in the Unit. Apart from the Enhanced Programme, the Unit is responsible for other water quality monitoring programme, such as the testing on the concentration of disinfection by-products and volatile organic compounds in drinking water. Therefore, a separate breakdown of the expenditure under the Enhanced Programme is not available.

- (b) The numbers of applications for the Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme (WSPSS) received by the WSD in the past 3 years are as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of applications	47	65	334
(Number of eligible buildings)	(160)	(151)	(594)

The total expenditure on the WSPSS in the past 3 years (i.e. 2021-22 to 2023-24 (as at the end of February)) was around \$12.5 million. About 10 staff comprising engineers, administration managers and waterworks inspectors are deployed by the WSD to promote the WSPSS, provide assistance and process applications.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1405)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the progress of establishing the Water Intelligent Network (WIN), would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number and rank of staff responsible for the WIN, their ratio of permanent to supernumerary posts and the relevant expenditure;
2. the details of updating the WIN in the past 3 years, such as the frequency of system upgrade, the new monitoring areas and their locations, the lengths of new water mains and the relevant expenditure;
3. the number of water main leaks detected through the WIN, the number of leakage areas and the quantity of fresh water loss in the past 3 years;
4. the average and longest time taken to rehabilitate the water mains after detecting the leakage through the WIN in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

Since 2015, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has implemented multi-pronged measures to maintain the healthiness of the water supply network and reduce the risk of water main bursts or leaks through the establishment of the Water Intelligent Network (WIN) and the implementation of the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains based on the "Risk-based Asset Management Programme for Water Mains". The WSD is establishing the WIN in the fresh water distribution network over the territory, with a target of about 2 400 District Metering Areas (DMAs). It helps to strengthen management of leakage in water supply network with the strategy of "divide and conquer" and continuous monitoring, and to implement appropriate measures including active leakage detection, pressure management, speedy repair of water main leaks and replacement or rehabilitation of water mains, etc.

1&2. As at the end of February 2024, the WSD has established around 2 020 DMAs covering all districts across Hong Kong. The remaining DMAs are expected for completion in 2025. The numbers of new established DMAs under the WIN across the territory in 2021, 2022 and 2023 by District Council district are tabulated as follows:

District	Number of new established DMAs in 2021	Number of new established DMAs in 2022	Number of new established DMAs in 2023
Central & Western	0	6	5
Eastern	8	10	6
Islands	13	13	10
Southern	6	10	6
Wan Chai	3	2	2
Kowloon City	2	2	1
Sham Shui Po	26	8	5
Wong Tai Sin	2	5	11
Kwun Tong	4	4	3
Yau Tsim Mong	0	0	2
North	1	17	30
Sai Kung	2	4	5
Sha Tin	28	33	9
Tai Po	0	31	3
Kwai Tsing	4	5	6
Tsuen Wan	5	5	19
Tuen Mun	2	16	6
Yuen Long	0	31	81
Total	106	202	210

In 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, the estimated expenditures on new established DMAs of the WIN were about \$120 million, \$180 million and \$190 million respectively.

In 2024-25, there are 6 permanent posts in the WSD involved in overseeing the consultants and contractors in establishing the WIN, including 1 assistant director, 1 chief engineer, 1 senior engineer and 3 engineers. Since the staff concerned have other duties to handle as well, the Government does not keep separate statistics on the salary expenses involved in the establishment of the WIN.

3&4. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, the numbers of leakage cases of government fresh water mains detected by the WSD through the WIN were 660, 880 and 1 037 respectively, while the respective quantities of fresh water loss reduced to about 30 million, 60 million and 75 million litres per day. The time taken from detecting water main leaks to repairing the water mains depends on various factors such as the implementation of temporary traffic arrangement, congested underground utilities or other obstructions in the leakage area and suspension of water supply, etc. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, the average time taken to repair the fresh water mains was about 5 hours. The longest time taken was about 12 days as the case required the handling of congested underground utilities and the arrangement of temporary water supply facilities during the repair of the concerned fresh water mains.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 1581)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Dongjiang (DJ) water mains transfer DJ water to the reservoirs in Hong Kong. At present, the water mains are normally laid above ground. With the development of the Northern Metropolis, would the Government inform this Committee whether it will consider laying the water mains underground when carrying out maintenance or another replacement works in the future?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

The Government currently has no plan to replace Dongjiang water mains. When necessary, the Government will carry out the design work in accordance with the established principles, including considering the feasibility and costs of different technical proposals, the requirements for future management and maintenance, as well as the impacts of the proposals on the area, such as environmental and traffic impacts, and consulting relevant stakeholders.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1822)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the combat against overcharging for water, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the number of reports on suspected overcharging for water received by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) since the amendment of the Waterworks Regulations in 2021; of these, the number of cases which (i) are still under investigation, (ii) were not pursuable due to insufficient evidence, and (iii) have been successfully prosecuted and convicted; and
- (2) the number of joint inspections conducted by the WSD and other departments and the number of cases of irregularities identified last year and this year to date?

Asked by: Hon LAM Chun-sing (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

The Government is committed to combating the unscrupulous landlords for overcharging their tenants for water through an inter-departmental and multi-pronged approach, including enacting relevant legislative amendments, stepping up inspections and streamlining the application procedures for the installation of separate water meters, and strengthening publicity and education efforts, with a view to enhancing the deterrent effect against overcharging subdivided unit (SDU) tenants for water.

- (1) Since the amendment of the Waterworks Regulations in 2021 up to the end of February this year, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has received a total of 126 reports on suspected overcharging for water. Amongst them, 11 cases are still under investigation, 99 cases were not pursuable due to insufficient evidence, and 16 cases have been successfully prosecuted and convicted.
- (2) In last year and this year up to the end of February, the WSD and the Rating and Valuation Department have jointly visited around 3 700 SDUs, among which about 40

suspected water overcharging cases were identified. The WSD is following up on the relevant cases.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2055)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the service of Non-routine Bill for Sub-divided Units (SDUs) of the Water Supplies Department, would the Government inform this Committee:

What was the number of non-routine water bill applications in each month of 2023?

1. What are (a) the expenditure on research and development, (b) the operational expenses in 2023, (c) the estimated operational expenses in 2024 and (d) the manpower involved for the computer system?

2. What measures did the Department take to ensure the non-routine water bills are applied and downloaded by SDU tenants in order to prevent landlords from concealing the actual water charges and continuing with the overcharging for water?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

The Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2023 is going through the legislative process in the Legislative Council. The amendment clearly specifies that landlords can only receive reimbursement of water charges from their tenants after a water bill is issued by the Water Authority. Such requirement can further reduce the chance of overcharging for water by landlords. If a tenant terminates the tenancy before the issue of a routine water bill, the landlord of the sub-divided unit (SDU) may pay the water bill issued through the service of Non-routine Bill for SDUs of the Water Supplies Department (WSD), and receive reimbursement of water charges from the tenant afterwards. Notwithstanding this, given that an accurate apportionment of water charges among SDU tenants may involve complicated calculations, SDU landlords may consider joining WSD's Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for SDUs to install separate water meters for their SDUs and save the efforts at such apportionment.

1. The service of Non-routine Bill for SDUs was launched on 5 October 2023. No non-routine water bill application was recorded in 2023.

The expenditure on development of the computer system for the service of Non-routine Bill for SDUs was about \$460,000. As the operational expenses are borne by the

existing service contract, there is no extra operational expense incurred. The relevant administrative work is absorbed by the existing staff establishment of the WSD.

2. The WSD launched the service of Non-routine Bill for SDUs to facilitate SDU tenants' settlement of water charges under special circumstances. In general, the WSD issues routine water bills to domestic consumers every 4 months. If an SDU tenant terminates the tenancy during the routine billing period of the WSD (i.e. within 4 months), the WSD registered consumer of the relevant SDU flat (usually the SDU landlord) may apply for and download the non-routine water bill through this service. Registered consumers may receive a proportionate portion of the water charges from their tenants after payment to the WSD. SDU tenants may request landlords who charge them for water to produce the water bills. If such request is denied or overcharging for water is suspected, they may report to the WSD for investigation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2057)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

On preventing subdivided unit (SDU) tenants from being overcharged for water, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the numbers of (i) inspections on SDUs conducted by the Water Supplies Department (WSD), and the numbers of those which were jointly operated with (ii) the Rating and Valuation Department or (iii) the Buildings Department (a) in 2023 and (b) in 2024 as anticipated;
2. the numbers of SDUs that have been/will be installed with separate water meters by the WSD (a) in 2023 and (b) in 2024 as anticipated;
3. the numbers of (a) complaints received, (b) prosecutions and (c) court convictions in respect of overcharging for water by SDU owners in 2023;
4. the (a) dedicated manpower, (b) salary expenses and (c) expenditures on equipment for the WSD to support SDU tenants (a) in 2023-24 and (b) in 2024-25 as anticipated?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

The Government is committed to combating the unscrupulous landlords for overcharging their tenants for water through an inter-departmental and multi-pronged approach, including enacting relevant legislative amendments, stepping up inspections and streamlining the application procedures for the installation of separate water meters, and strengthening publicity and education efforts, with a view to enhancing the deterrent effect of overcharging subdivided unit (SDU) tenants for water.

- 1.&3. In 2023, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) inspected about 3 500 SDUs. All inspections were jointly conducted with the Rating and Valuation Department. Besides, the WSD received a total of 53 complaint cases of overcharging SDU tenants for water. For most cases, no follow-up investigation could be pursued by the WSD as the complainants were not willing to serve as witnesses or were unable to provide the relevant information. Therefore, only 10 cases of which could be prosecuted and they were all successfully convicted by courts.

The Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2023 (Bill) is going through the legislative process in the Legislative Council. If the Bill is passed, it will strengthen the power of the WSD in evidence collection for cases involving water overcharge, leading to an expected increase in number of complaints to follow up. We will closely monitor the change in the number of complaints and suitably deploy internal resources to conduct inspections on SDUs, as well as investigations and prosecutions on the complaints.

2. In 2023, the WSD has installed separate water meters for 342 SDUs. Subject to the passing of the Bill, the WSD will strengthen the relevant publicity and promotional activities, which are expected to encourage more SDU owners to install separate water meters in 2024.
4. In 2023-24, the WSD has deployed internal manpower and equipment to support SDU tenants, which includes conducting inspections on SDUs, following up on the investigations on overcharging for water in SDUs, and assisting in processing applications for the installation of separate water meters. Since the staff participating in the above work also handled other duties, we are unable to provide the expenditure on such work.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2450)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the various situations contributing to water seepage in buildings, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) may carry out inspections and enforcement actions in accordance with the Waterworks Ordinance. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. How many cases were received in respect of suspected leakage of water supply pipes in each of the past 3 years? Among such cases, how many of them were referred by the Joint Office each year?
2. How many site inspections and "flow-checks" were carried out regarding the suspected leakage of water supply pipes in each of the past 3 years? Among such cases, how many of them were confirmed with leakage of water supply pipes?
3. How many repair notices were issued in each of the past 3 years?
4. How many disconnections of water supply were arranged for consumers who failed to carry out the repair works as required by the notices in each of the past 3 years?
5. As revealed by the Audit Commission in the past, the WSD did not arrange disconnection of water supply even when consumers failed to complete the repair works on time after the issuance of repair notices, letting the leakage continued and causing water wastage. At present, does the WSD have a performance pledge on the number of days required to arrange disconnection of water supply when consumers fail to comply with the notices?
6. In cases where WSD staff suspect that there is leakage of water supply pipes in the premises but the owner denies their entry to the premises for inspection, does the WSD have any mechanism in place to arrange disconnection of water supply so as to avoid water wastage or further leakage which may affect other consumers? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 129)

Reply:

1&2. The cases received by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) in respect of water seepage in buildings due to suspected leakage of water pipes in the insides services include those referred by the Joint Office (JO) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department after investigations and follow up, and those with site inspections and checks directly conducted by the WSD. The numbers of cases handled by the WSD in the past 3 years are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	Cases received in respect of water seepage in buildings due to suspected leakage of water supply pipes		
	2021	2022	2023
Cases referred by the JO after investigations and follow up (Cases confirmed with leakage in water supply pipes)	438 (119)	426 (93)	391 (92)
Other cases with site inspections and checks directly conducted by the WSD (Cases confirmed with leakage in water supply pipes)	1 339 (147)	1 454 (116)	1 806 (144)
Total	1 777	1 880	2 197

3. The WSD will study whether the cases involve water wastage in accordance with the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102). After investigations, if the WSD obtains concrete evidence to prove that the leakage of water supply pipes has caused water wastage, the WSD will issue repair notices to the registered consumers concerned and require them to repair the defective pipes within a specified time limit. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, the numbers of cases with repair notices issued by the WSD were 266, 209 and 236 respectively.

4. If consumers fail to complete the repair works as required by the repair notices, the WSD will seriously consider arranging disconnection of their water supply. According to record, in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the numbers of cases where consumers failed to complete the repair works as required by the repair notices which eventually led to the disconnection of water supply were 8, 4 and 10 respectively.

5. WSD staff will visit the premises for follow up inspection after the time limit specified in the repair notice to ascertain the repair works are completed as required by the repair notice. Registered consumers who are unable to complete the repair works within the time limit may apply to the WSD in writing for extension of time and provide supporting documents. The WSD will assess the justifications of the applications and determine whether to accept the applications. If the consumers fail to complete the repair works within the time limit of the repair notice or the extended period granted, the WSD will issue disconnection notices and disconnect the water supply of the premises concerned after the specified due date. Since every case is unique (e.g. longer time may be required to complete the repair works due to its

complexity), the WSD does not set a standard time limit for arranging disconnection of water supply.

6. If there is prima facie evidence showing the leakage of water supply pipes in the premises, and the owner denies the entry of WSD staff to the premises for inspection, the WSD will apply to the Court for a warrant to enter the premises for inspection in accordance with the Waterworks Ordinance. Enforcement actions will also be taken according to the above mechanism to avoid water wastage.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2485)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution, (2) Water Quality Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding water consumption in the past 3 years in Hong Kong, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- the water consumption per year in Hong Kong, the source of drinking water supply and the proportion of drinking water purchased from the Mainland;
- the number and results of tests on drinking water of residential units each year;
- the ratio of using fresh water for flushing; whether it will be lowered in the coming 10 years; if yes, of the details;
- the estimated number of households living in village houses in rural areas that will convert to salt water for flushing in the coming year (broken down by District Council district);
- with the increasing popularity of smart water closet, the number of illegal installation cases identified by the Department in which no backflow prevention device was installed as required in the past 3 years;
- the respective number of reports of fresh water main bursts and salt water main bursts in each district each year;
- the total quantity of drinking water wasted each year; and
- the progress of the Replacement and Rehabilitation Programme for water mains?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

At present, the major sources of fresh water supply in Hong Kong include rainwater collected from local catchments of impounding reservoirs, Dongjiang (DJ) water imported from Guangdong Province and fresh water produced by the first stage of Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant commissioned at the end of 2023.

1. The fresh water consumptions (including consumption of fresh water for flushing), the supply quantity and proportion of DJ water in Hong Kong in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	Fresh water consumption (million cubic metres)	DJ water	
		Supply quantity (million cubic metres)	Percentage in fresh water consumption
2021	1 055	811	77%
2022	1 066	810	76%
2023	1 068	820	77%

2. The Water Supplies Department (WSD) implemented the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme (Enhanced Programme) in December 2017 to monitor the drinking water at consumers' taps in randomly selected premises. The parameters being monitored include 6 metals (viz. antimony, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead and nickel), residual chlorine and Escherichia coli. The numbers of tests on drinking water samples under the Enhanced Programme in the past 3 years are as follows:

	2021	2022 ^(Note)	2023
Number of randomly selected premises (Number of samples)	675 (1 525)	460 (1 385)	661 (1 987)

Note: In view of the COVID-19 epidemic situation at the time, the WSD suspended collection of drinking water samples under the Enhanced Programme from 13 January to 19 May 2022.

According to the test results of the sampling protocol under the Enhanced Programme in the past 3 years, with the exception of the cases of lead exceedance found in the drinking water in 2 non-domestic premises in 2021 and 2022 due to the cleansing and maintenance problem of the inside services, the drinking water of all premises randomly selected for monitoring complied with the Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards. Follow-up works on the 2 exceedance cases were completed in the respective year.

- 3.&4. Seawater for flushing is largely adopted in Hong Kong. The consumption of temporary fresh water for flushing currently accounts for about 15% of the total flushing water consumption. The WSD is proactively expanding the use of lower grade water (including seawater and recycled water) for flushing to save fresh water resources. The consumption of fresh water for flushing in the future will gradually decrease to an amount accounting for about 12% of the total flushing water consumption by 2030.

Regarding the major plan for expanding the use of lower grade water, the WSD is constructing a district-based grey water recycling system at the Anderson Road Quarry Development in order to treat grey water collected at the development area (i.e. collected from baths, wash basins, kitchen sinks, etc. and can be treated for non-potable uses) and supply the treated grey water for flushing and other non-potable purposes within the area. The system is anticipated for commissioning in phases starting from the end of this year.

Besides, as Tung Chung New Town is still being supplied with fresh water for flushing, the WSD is constructing a salt water supply system in the area to replace fresh water for flushing. The system is expected to be completed in the middle of this year and commence operation in phases.

In addition, the WSD will supply reclaimed water to Sheung Shui and Fanling in phases from this year to replace the current temporary mains fresh water for flushing. We will also extend the supply of reclaimed water to Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Areas in accordance with their development programmes.

Currently, villages in the New Territories using fresh water for flushing are mainly located in the Yuen Long, North, Tai Po, Islands, Sai Kung and Tuen Mun District Council districts. Only a few villages in these districts are located within the salt water supply network. We will construct water mains and carry out conversion works to supply salt water to the villagers concerned whenever technically feasible and cost-effective. For the other villages which are mostly situated in remote locations, conversion to salt water for flushing will not be cost-effective.

The Government will continue to review the situation and expand the use of seawater and recycled water to other new development areas and those areas still using fresh water for flushing whenever technically feasible and cost-effective to further save fresh water resources.

5. In the past 3 years, the WSD did not institute prosecution against the cases of smart water closets without a backflow prevention device installed as required which contravene the Waterworks Regulations.
6. The numbers of fresh water and salt water main burst cases in the past 3 years by District Council district are tabulated below:

District	Burst cases					
	Fresh water main			Salt water main		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Central & Western	2	2	2	2	2	1
Eastern	1	1	1	2	0	1
Islands	0	2	4	0	0	0
Southern	0	1	1	1	2	0
Wan Chai	2	1	0	2	1	0
Kowloon City	1	0	1	1	2	0
Kwun Tong	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sham Shui Po	0	0	1	1	1	1
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0	0	1	4
Yau Tsim Mong	0	2	1	0	0	0
North	0	0	2	0	0	0

District	Burst cases					
	Fresh water main			Salt water main		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Sai Kung	1	0	3	0	0	0
Sha Tin	1	3	0	2	2	1
Tai Po	0	2	1	2	1	1
Kwai Tsing	1	1	0	1	1	1
Tuen Mun	3	1	1	0	3	3
Tsuen Wan	2	2	2	0	2	0
Yuen Long	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	15	18	21	14	18	13

7. In the past 3 years (i.e. 2021, 2022 and 2023), the leakage rates of government fresh water mains were 14.6%, 14.4% and 14% respectively.
8. Since 2015, the WSD has implemented the “risk-based asset management programme for water mains” by introducing factors such as age of use, materials, past records of bursts or leaks, surrounding environment, etc. for assessing the risk of water main bursts or leaks so as to replace or rehabilitate specific sections of water mains with higher risk progressively with a view to maintaining the healthiness of the water supply network and reducing the risk of water main bursts or leaks. As of 2023, a total of approximately 490 km long water mains has been included in the “risk-based asset management programme for water mains”. Amongst them, approximately 185 km long water mains have been replaced or rehabilitated while the improvement works for the rest are underway or will be progressively carried out.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)220

(Question Serial No. 2486)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB). The reply was prepared by the Water Supplies Department and vetted by the EEB.]

Question:

The Government has been installing floating photovoltaic (PV) systems at reservoirs since 2017. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. What are the installation costs of the PV systems at reservoirs?
2. What were the annual amount of electricity generated by the PV systems at reservoirs in the past 5 years?
3. Further to the above question, where will the electricity generated by the PV systems at reservoirs be used respectively?
4. What is the frequency of damage of floating PV panels caused by adverse weather since the installation? What is the repair expenditure involved? What are the measures to enhance the resilience of the PV systems against super typhoon?
5. As the PV systems at reservoirs are subject to more environmental factors, what is the repair and maintenance cost of the systems in comparison with other PV systems?
6. Further to the above question, does the Government have any new plan to install PV panels at reservoirs in future? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1-3. Since 2017, the Government has implemented the pilot projects of floating photovoltaic (PV) system at Shek Pik Reservoir, Plover Cove Reservoir and Tai Lam Chung Reservoir. The installation costs of the floating PV systems at the reservoirs and other relevant information are tabulated as follows:

Installation locations	Shek Pik Reservoir	Plover Cove Reservoir	Tai Lam Chung Reservoir
Generating capacity	100 kilowatts (kW)	100 kW	100 kW
Completion date	February 2017	October 2017	April 2022
Cost (HK\$)	about 3.5 million	about 3.3 million	about 3.1 million
Facilities powered	Shek Pik Raw Water Pumping Station	Plover Cove Reservoir Air Compressor House	Tai Lam Chung Reservoir Air Compressor House

The amount of electricity generated by a PV system is subject to the weather and insolation duration of individual area at the time. According to the design, each floating PV system can generate 120 000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity annually.

4. During the passage of super typhoon Mangkhut in September 2018, the anchorage system of the floating PV system at Plover Cove Reservoir was damaged as the wind force had exceeded the requirements of the system design at the time, resulting in damage to some PV panels. On that occasion, the repair expenditure was about \$1.2 million. Afterwards, when designing the floating PV system for Tai Lam Chung Reservoir, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) used an enhanced anchorage system with tensile strength to enhance the system's resilience against typhoon.
5. With the enhancement of the anchorage system, the annual repair and maintenance cost of each floating PV system at the 3 abovementioned reservoirs is around \$50,000, which is similar to that of the PV systems at other waterworks of the WSD.
6. Building on the successful experience of the pilot projects of floating PV system, the WSD plans to develop a large-scale floating PV system at Plover Cover Reservoir. Upon the completion of the system in 2026, it is expected to supply an annual electricity of 6 million kWh to the nearby Harbour Island Raw Water Pumping Station for direct use and reduce about 4 200 tonnes of carbon emissions at the same time.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2674)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under Programme (1) that the Department will continue with the construction of infrastructure in stages for supplying reclaimed water for non-potable uses in the north-eastern part of the New Territories including Sheung Shui and Fanling, and the construction of grey water treatment plant for supplying treated grey water for non-potable uses in the Anderson Road Quarry Development. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the differences between “reclaimed water” and “treated grey water”;
2. the respective costs per cubic metre of “reclaimed water” and “treated grey water” supplied;
3. the (i) manpower, (ii) salary expenses and (iii) project expenditures for supplying reclaimed water in the north-eastern part of the New Territories (a) in 2023-24 and (b) in 2024-25 as anticipated;
4. the (i) manpower, (ii) salary expenses and (iii) project expenditures for supplying treated grey water in the Anderson Road Quarry Development (a) in 2023-24 and (b) in 2024-25 as anticipated?

Asked by: Hon NG Chau-pei, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) adopts a two-pronged approach with emphasis on containing fresh water demand growth and building resilience in fresh water supply to cater for extreme effects of climate change with diversified water resources. One of the key initiatives of containing water demand is the expansion of use of recycled water (including reclaimed water and treated grey water) for non-potable purposes.

1. Reclaimed water is the water converted from treated sewage effluent collected from sewage treatment plant with further treatment for reuse, while treated grey water is the used water collected from baths, lavatory basins, kitchen sinks or similar fitments in premises with further treatment for reuse.

2. Currently, the estimated unit cost per cubic metre of reclaimed water supplied from Shek Wu Hui water reclamation plant of the WSD in Sheung Shui is around \$7.8, which includes

the costs for the collection and further treatment of treated sewage effluent, distribution of reclaimed water and customer services, etc. The estimated unit cost per cubic metre of treated grey water supplied from the grey water treatment plant at Anderson Road Quarry site is around \$12.2, which includes the costs for the collection and treatment of grey water, distribution of treated grey water and customer services, etc.

3. Regarding the works for supplying reclaimed water to the north-eastern part of the New Territories, there are 6 staff posts of the WSD involved in overseeing the consultants and contractors in carrying out the infrastructure works. Since the staff concerned have other duties to handle as well, no separate breakdown of the salary expenses involved is available. In 2023-24, the expenditure of the WSD on the project was about \$351 million. The estimated expenditure in 2024-25 is around \$143 million.

4. As regards the construction of grey water treatment plant in the Anderson Road Quarry Development, there are 4 staff posts of the WSD involved in overseeing the consultants and contractors in carrying out the construction of grey water treatment plant. Since the staff have other duties to handle as well, no separate breakdown of the salary expenses involved is available. In 2023-24, the expenditure of the WSD on the project was about \$136 million. The estimated expenditure in 2024-25 is around \$54 million.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2901)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the infrastructure works to support rural development, please inform this Committee of the number, types and costs of works conducted in rural areas in the past 5 years, breakdown by district.

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

The Government has always been committed to enhancing the infrastructure in rural areas and improving various public facilities on a need basis. In this regard, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has been reviewing the water consumption in rural areas, and will construct water supply systems for areas without treated water supply whenever technically feasible, cost-effective and the water demand is sufficient without causing potential water quality risk.

In the past 5 years, the WSD has provided treated water supply to the following villages:

District	Name of village	Type of works	Approved project estimate (\$ million)
Sha Tin	Mui Tsz Lam, Sha Tin	Water supply facilities including pump house, water tank and associated pipework (completed in 2021)	27.7
Islands	Tai Long, Chi Ma Wan Peninsula, South Lantau	Water supply facilities including pump house, water tank and associated pipework (commenced in August 2021 and expected to complete in the second quarter of 2024)	29.4

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3002)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

It is mentioned in Programme (1) that there will be a net decrease of 31 posts in 2024-25. Would the Government explain the reasons for the substantial decrease in the number of posts, as well as the posts to be deleted and the savings achieved in the total expenditure?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

In Programme (1), the posts are mainly deleted by the Department to enhance effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes under the Government's policy to strictly control the civil service establishment. In addition, some posts to be deleted are time-limited posts which will be deleted upon expiry of the duration for which the posts are created or upon completion of the jobs concerned. Posts which no longer have operational needs will be deleted by the Department after review of the establishment. The total expenditure on the posts to be deleted is \$4,324,680.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3059)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Fresh water is a precious resource and the purchase of Dongjiang (DJ) water is the main source of fresh water in Hong Kong. DJ water mainly comes from natural rainfall. However, climate is ever-changing and although Hong Kong has signed a water supply agreement with Guangdong Province to secure a stable water supply, we still cannot prevent the problem of inadequate yield caused by climate change or other factors, not to mention the increasing population in Greater Bay Area, as well as the growing demand for fresh water. In view of this, would the Government inform this Committee of the measures to promote water conservation and save water while ensuring a reliable water supply? Are there measures to cope with the possible insufficient water supply under extreme climate?

Asked by: Hon CHU Kwok-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) has been proactively implementing the Total Water Management Strategy (Strategy) since 2008 with emphasis on containing fresh water demand growth by promoting water conservation through public education, and exploiting diversified water resources for building resilience of water supply to cater for effects of climate change. WSD is conducting a mid-term review of the Strategy to adjust the strength and pace of various options of measures in the Strategy in accordance with the latest water demand forecast. WSD expects the review to be completed at the end of this year.

On water conservation, we consider it necessary to educate the public at young age. Thus, WSD has launched the "Cherish Water Campus" Integrated Education Programme in kindergartens and primary schools. Over 450 kindergartens and 400 primary schools have joined the programme so far. WSD has also launched the Cherish Water Ambassador Scheme for secondary students to deepen their understanding on the importance of cherishing water resources, fulfil and publicise the habits of cherishing water and promote water conservation culture to the public through an array of events. A Water Resources Education Centre named "H2OPE Centre" was set up in Tin Shui Wai to provide more information on

water resources and water conservation to the general public so as to foster a culture of cherishing water in society.

To encourage the use of water-saving devices, WSD launched the voluntary Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme in 2009 covering showers for bathing, water taps, washing machines, urinal equipment, flow controllers and water closets to inform customers of the water efficiency performance of different products for selecting water-saving devices of high efficiency. Since 2014, we have progressively installed flow controllers for domestic consumers and schools. We have also distributed flow controllers for free to those consumers who have signed a commitment certificate about water conservation on WSD's website or who have successfully applied for e-Bill service.

To promote water cherishing culture to commercial and industrial sectors, WSD organised the Enterprises Cherish Water Campaign (ECH2O) with the Green Council in 2022-23 to publicise water conservation through initiatives including signing of charter, appointment of cherish water manager, recognition programme, etc. Over 600 premises have joined the campaign. Due to the active participation and positive response, we are organising the ECH2O in 2024-25. We have also issued "Best Practice Guidelines for Water Usage" for catering and hotel sectors and promote water conservation to the sectors through relevant associations.

WSD launched a new water conservation campaign "Save Water Today for a Sustainable Future" in February this year to step up publicity. Through introducing the theme song, organising water conservation carnival, and the wide use of social media and online campaigns, it is aimed to convey the message of water conservation and encourage active public participation in a more effective way.

In coping with the impacts of climate change, the Government is actively exploiting seawater desalination and recycled water to build resilience in water supply. The first stage of Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Desalination Plant was commissioned in December 2023. With a water production capacity of up to 50 million cubic metres (mcm) per annum, it can meet about 5% of the total fresh water consumption in Hong Kong. Besides, WSD is reviewing the programme and conducting investigation study for the implementation of the second stage of TKO Desalination Plant, which is expected to provide an extra fresh water supply of about 50 mcm per annum.

Regarding the plan to promote the use of recycled water, WSD will supply reclaimed water to Sheung Shui and Fanling in phases starting from March this year to replace the current temporary mains fresh water for flushing and also extend the supply of reclaimed water to Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Areas in accordance with their development programmes. In addition, WSD is constructing a district-based grey water recycling system at the Anderson Road Quarry Development in order to treat grey water (i.e. collected from baths, wash basins, kitchen sinks, etc. and can be treated for non-potable uses) collected at the development area and supply the treated grey water for flushing and other non-potable purposes within the area. The system is anticipated for commissioning in phases starting from the end of 2024.

We will continue to review the actual situation and expand the use of recycled water to other new development areas and those areas still using fresh water for flushing whenever technically feasible and cost-effective to further save fresh water resources.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3546)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Desalination Plant was commissioned at the end of last year. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- the cost per cubic metre compared to that for purchasing fresh water from the Mainland;
- the annual operating expenditure of the TKO Desalination Plant;
- the progress of the second stage of the desalination plant;
- whether the Government will keep on identifying sites for construction of desalination plants; if yes, of the details; if no, of the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 67)

Reply:

Desalinated water is a strategic water resource not susceptible to the effects of climate change and capable to build resilience in fresh water supply. In December last year, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) commissioned the first stage of Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Desalination Plant which can provide up to about 5% of extra fresh water supply to Hong Kong.

The unit water production cost of the TKO Desalination Plant is about \$13 per cubic metre, while the unit water production cost of Dongjiang water is around \$11 per cubic metre.

The estimated annual operating expenditure of the TKO Desalination Plant is about \$316 million.

The WSD is carrying out an investigation study for the project of the second stage of TKO Desalination Plant. Meanwhile, the WSD is conducting a mid-term review of Total Water Management Strategy (Strategy) to adjust the need, strength and pace of various options of measures in the Strategy (including the second stage of TKO Desalination Plant and other desalination plants) in accordance with the latest water demand forecast. The WSD expects the review to be completed at the end of this year.

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3619)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

When incidents such as main bursts occur, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) will arrange for emergency water suspension, issue water suspension notices, and deploy water wagons and water tanks as necessary to provide emergency temporary water supply to the public affected until the water mains are rehabilitated and water supply is restored. In this connection, would the Department inform this Committee:

1. How many emergency water suspension notices were issued in the 18 districts in each of the past 3 years?
2. How many water wagons and water tanks are available for emergency deployment from various regions of the WSD to provide emergency temporary water supply to the public?
3. What were the fresh water leakage rates in Hong Kong in the past 3 years?
4. The WSD has set a target of "main burst hot spots" to expedite the replacement or rehabilitation of water mains in the hot spots. What was the total number of main burst hot spots in each of the past 3 years?
5. Please provide the list of the locations of "main burst hot spots" in various districts at present.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 130)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) has all along been committed to providing the public with reliable, sufficient and quality water supply. Through continuous improvement in asset management and making good use of technology, the WSD will continue to maintain the healthiness of the water supply network and reduce the risk of water main bursts or leaks.

1&2. In the past 3 years, i.e. 2021, 2022 and 2023, the numbers of emergency water suspension notices issued by the WSD were 8 587, 8 850 and 8 784 respectively. The WSD currently has 10 water wagons and 144 water tanks available across the territory for emergency temporary water supply.

3-5. In the past 3 years, the leakage rates of government fresh water mains were 14.6%, 14.4% and 14% respectively, while the respective numbers of “main burst hot spots” (see Note) were 14, 9 and 8. The current locations of “main burst hot spots” are tabulated as follows:

District	Location
Eastern	Java Road
Eastern	Caroline Hill Road
Central & Western	Queen’s Road West
Central & Western	Junction of Belcher’s Street and Smithfield Road
Tsuen Wan	Sai Lau Kok Road
Tsuen Wan	Texaco Road
Tuen Mun	Tuen Mun Heung Sze Wui Road
Tuen Mun	Lung Mun Road

[Note: “Main burst hot spots” refers to locations where at least 2 bursts (other than damage or suspected damage cases) of water mains (with diameter 150 millimetres or above) occurred in 2 years within a road section of 400 metres length.]

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3642)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

As stated in the Programme, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) will continue to step up prosecution and inspections against overcharging for water in subdivided units (SDUs) with strengthened law enforcement power after the enactment of Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2023 (Bill). In this connection, please inform this Committee:

1. What is the total number of inspections and visits to the SDUs conducted by the WSD since the enactment of the Waterworks (Waterworks Regulations) (Amendment) Ordinance in May 2021?
2. Please set out in table form by year the total number of complaints received, the number of prosecutions instigated by the WSD and the relevant penalty imposed since May 2021.
3. What is the Government's plan on the inspections against overcharging for water in SDUs after the enactment of the Bill?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 62)

Reply:

The Government is committed to combating the unscrupulous landlords for overcharging their tenants for water through an inter-departmental and multi-pronged approach, including enacting relevant legislative amendments, stepping up inspections and streamlining the application procedures for the installation of separate water meters, and strengthening publicity and education efforts, with a view to enhancing the deterrent effect against overcharging subdivided unit (SDU) tenants for water.

The reply to the questions raised by the Member is as follows:

1. Since the enactment of the Waterworks (Waterworks Regulations) (Amendment) Ordinance in May 2021 up to the end of February this year, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has inspected about 7 100 SDUs.

2. Since the enactment of the Waterworks (Waterworks Regulations) (Amendment) Ordinance in May 2021 up to the end of February this year, the WSD has received a total of 126 reports on suspected overcharging for water. Amongst them, 11 cases are still under investigation, 99 cases were not pursuable due to insufficient evidence, and 16 cases have been successfully prosecuted and convicted. The fines for the convicted cases ranged from \$1,000 to \$6,500.

3. The Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2023 (Bill) is going through the legislative process in the Legislative Council. If the Bill is passed, it will strengthen the power of the WSD in evidence collection for cases of overcharging for water, leading to an expected increase in number of complaints to follow up. We will closely monitor the change in the number of complaints and suitably deploy internal resources to conduct inspections on SDUs, as well as investigations and prosecutions on the complaints.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3644)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (WONG Yan-lok, Roger)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Since the century-old Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR) was discovered at the end of 2020, the Government has not reached a final decision on the conservation plan of the Ex-SSPSR. It only opens the Ex-SSPSR for public visit through guided tour reservation and expressed the intention to include the Ex-SSPSR in the revitalising scheme. In this connection, please inform this Committee:

1. Please set out in table form by year the number of visitors since the opening for guided tour reservation by the Water Supplies Department (WSD).
2. The WSD has been collecting views from the public on the conservation of the Ex-SSPSR. Please specify the top 3 preferences of the public on the revitalisation and conservation use.
3. Does the Government include the Ex-SSPSR in the next phase of the revitalisation scheme? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
4. When will the Government finalise the conservation plan of the Ex-SSPSR and commence the relevant work?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 64)

Reply:

1&2. The Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR) is a Grade 1 historic building. Following the introduction of virtual tours in March 2021, we launched guided tours and self-guided tours in December 2021 and October 2022 respectively to allow restricted opening of this historical building for visit by the public so that they can learn about and appreciate its historical background and interior architectural features, with a view to enhancing the awareness of historical waterworks structures and heritage conservation. The number of visitors accessing through guided tours and self-guided tours since December 2021 is summarised as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of visitors</u>
2021 (from December)	482
2022	20 318
2023	54 500
2024 (as at the end of February)	6 966
Total number of visitors (as at the end of February 2024)	82 266

We are conducting questionnaire survey to collect views of visitors on the conservation and revitalisation of the Ex-SSPSR. According to the views received at this stage, the public considered that after revitalisation, the Ex-SSPSR is most suitable for the following long-term uses: (1) waterworks history museum; (2) public event space; and (3) venue for arts and cultural events (e.g. library, museum).

3&4. We are examining the public views on the long-term use of the Ex-SSPSR, studying the feasibility of different conservation and revitalisation plans, and devising further details on the plan. During the study, we will consider the factors normally examined when including historical buildings in the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, such as the accessibility of the building, whether it is suitable for non-profit-making organisations to operate social enterprises there sustainably, as well as the views from local stakeholders and public expectations, etc. We will continue to collect views from visitors and listen to the opinions of local personalities and relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. Meanwhile, we will continue to open the Ex-SSPSR for public visit and appreciation through guided tours and self-guided tours.

- End -